

Media Release

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Santa Ynez Valley organization files lawsuit to stop Chumash Reservation expansion

(Santa Ynez, Calif) On Tuesday October 31, 2017, Santa Ynez Valley Concerned Citizens (SYVCC) filed a lawsuit in federal court challenging the illegal federal action to take the 1,400-acre Camp 4 property into trust on behalf of the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians. The suit asserts that the Department of Interior's decision to take this action was based on an insufficient analysis of its environmental and land-use impacts as required by the federal law.

This suit comes as the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors approved an inter-governmental agreement regarding Camp 4 requiring the County to withdraw litigation also challenging this "fee-to-trust" decision.

"Residents of the Santa Ynez Valley have exhausted the administrative remedies available to us, and we are now turning to the federal courts to seek relief from the Bureau of Indian Affairs' illegal action on Camp 4. It impacts not only valley residents, but places a tax burden on all County taxpayers", said Greg Simon of Santa Ynez Valley Concerned Citizens. "Consequently, we felt it imperative that the significant legal flaws with the federal government's Camp 4 decision be fully aired and adjudicated in federal court."

The suit, brought by SYVCC and three homeowners who live adjacent to the trust property, alleges that the analysis of the environmental, land-use, economic and other impacts as required by federal law was wholly inadequate and insufficient upon which to base the federal decision to take Camp 4 into trust. Instead of requiring a more comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) relied instead on a more limited Environmental Analysis (EA).

Santa Ynez Valley Concerned Citizens

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“We are happy to support Concerned Citizens in their efforts seeking justice for the Santa Ynez Valley and preserving its rural character and natural environment”, said Bill Krauch, Chairman of the Santa Ynez Valley Coalition. “They are filling the void that has been left by the County, and we wholeheartedly support and endorse this endeavor.”

In the event the Santa Ynez Valley Concerned Citizens' were to prevail in Court, the decision to take Camp 4 into trust will be reversed, and the federal government will be required to undertake a more thorough analysis and prepare an EIS for public review and comment. The BIA will be required to reevaluate the Tribe's trust application taking into consideration the new information from the more thorough analysis.

The mission of the Santa Ynez Valley Concerned Citizens to inform, mobilize and articulate the concerns of the citizens of the greater Santa Ynez Valley on issues of land use, Private Property, and stewardship of community resources. Where appropriate we will promote constructive dialogue on issues of civic concern and request accountability from governmental entities and officials. Our paramount objective is to be a constructive part of solutions on issues that impact the Santa Ynez Valley Community.

[Editors Note: The Santa Ynez Valley Concerned Citizens' complaint can be [downloaded here.](#)]

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